



The Physical Therapy Profession

November 19, 2025

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PTMovesMe

Provided by  **APTA**

Introduction to Physical Therapy



Physical therapy is treatment provided by a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant that helps people improve their movement and physical function, manage pain and other chronic conditions, and recover from and prevent injury and chronic disease.



Physical Therapists Are Movement Experts



- **Licensed doctors** who **examine, diagnose, and treat** movement dysfunction.
- Help people impacted by disease, injury, and disability.
- Prevent movement loss and promote wellness.
- Use therapeutic exercise, modalities, assistive devices, patient education, and evidence-based research to treat patients.

Physical Therapist Assistants Collaborate With PTs

- Educated and **licensed or certified clinicians.**
- Provide physical therapy services **under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist.**
- Implement components of patient care, obtain data related to the treatments provided, and collaborate with physical therapists to modify care, as necessary.
- Physical therapist assistants are not the same as physical therapy aides.



More than 21 million U.S. adults have a disability.

Physical therapists can develop a physical activity plan for people with physical disabilities based on their individual goals, needs, and challenges.



8 Things You Didn't Know About Physical Therapy



1. Only Licensed PTs and PTAs Can Provide Physical Therapist Services

Physical Therapists are not:

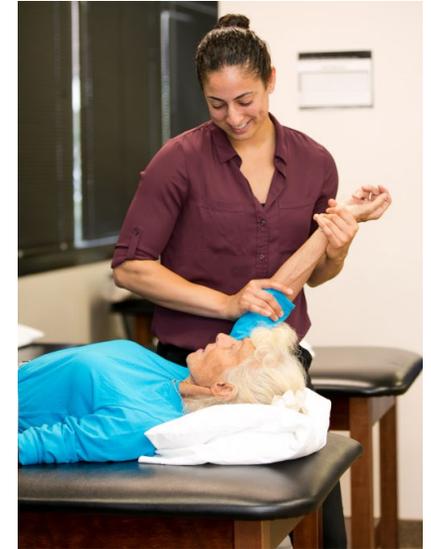
- Personal trainers.
- Massage therapists.
- Athletic trainers.
- Chiropractors.

Physical Therapists are:

- Movement and body mechanics experts.
- Licensed clinical doctors.
- Evidence-based practitioners.
- Trained to diagnose, examine, and treat all populations.

2. PTs and PTAs Care for People of All Ages and Abilities

They treat patients across the lifespan (birth to end of life)



3. PTs and PTAs Work Throughout the Health Care System

Hospitals and Acute Care Facilities	Private Practice	Outpatient Clinics	Nursing Homes
Assisted-Living Facilities	Home Health	Schools	Sports and Fitness Facilities
Corporate Offices	Military	Public Health	More...

4. PTs and PTAs Can Focus on Specific Areas of Care

PT Specialties

Cardiovascular & Pulmonary
Clinical Electrophysiology
Geriatrics
Neurology
Oncology
Orthopaedics
Pediatrics
Sports
Women's Health
Wound Management

PTA Proficiencies

Acute Care
Cardiovascular & Pulmonary
Geriatrics
Oncology
Orthopaedics
Pediatrics
Wound Management

5. PTs and PTAs Treat Multiple Body Systems

They also manage and decrease symptoms associated with diseases and disorders.



For example:

- **Cardiovascular:** Coronary artery disease
- **Respiratory:** Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- **Integumentary:** Skin burns
- **Muscular/Skeletal:** Back pain, dislocations/fractures
- **Nervous:** Stroke, traumatic brain injury, vertigo
- **Urinary/Renal:** Incontinence
- **Reproductive:** Pelvic pain
- **Immune/Lymphatic:** Lymphedema
- **Digestive:** SIBO, GERD, IBS

6. You Do Not Have To Be a Science Major* To Pursue a Career in Physical Therapy



Popular Majors

- Exercise/health science
- Spanish
- Business administration
- Psychology
- Liberal arts

*You will have to take science courses, but you do not have to be a science major.

7. There Are Two Physical Therapy Career Pathways

Pathway to DPT



* Some DPT programs offer freshman entry

Pathway to PTA



8. As a Physical Therapist You Can Be a

- Clinical practitioner.
- Board-certified specialist.
- PT resident.
- PT fellow.
- Professor/program director.
- Researcher.
- Professional advocate.
- APTA staff/CEO/Board member.
- Travel PT.
- Entrepreneur.
- Influencer.
- More ...

Physical Therapy Education



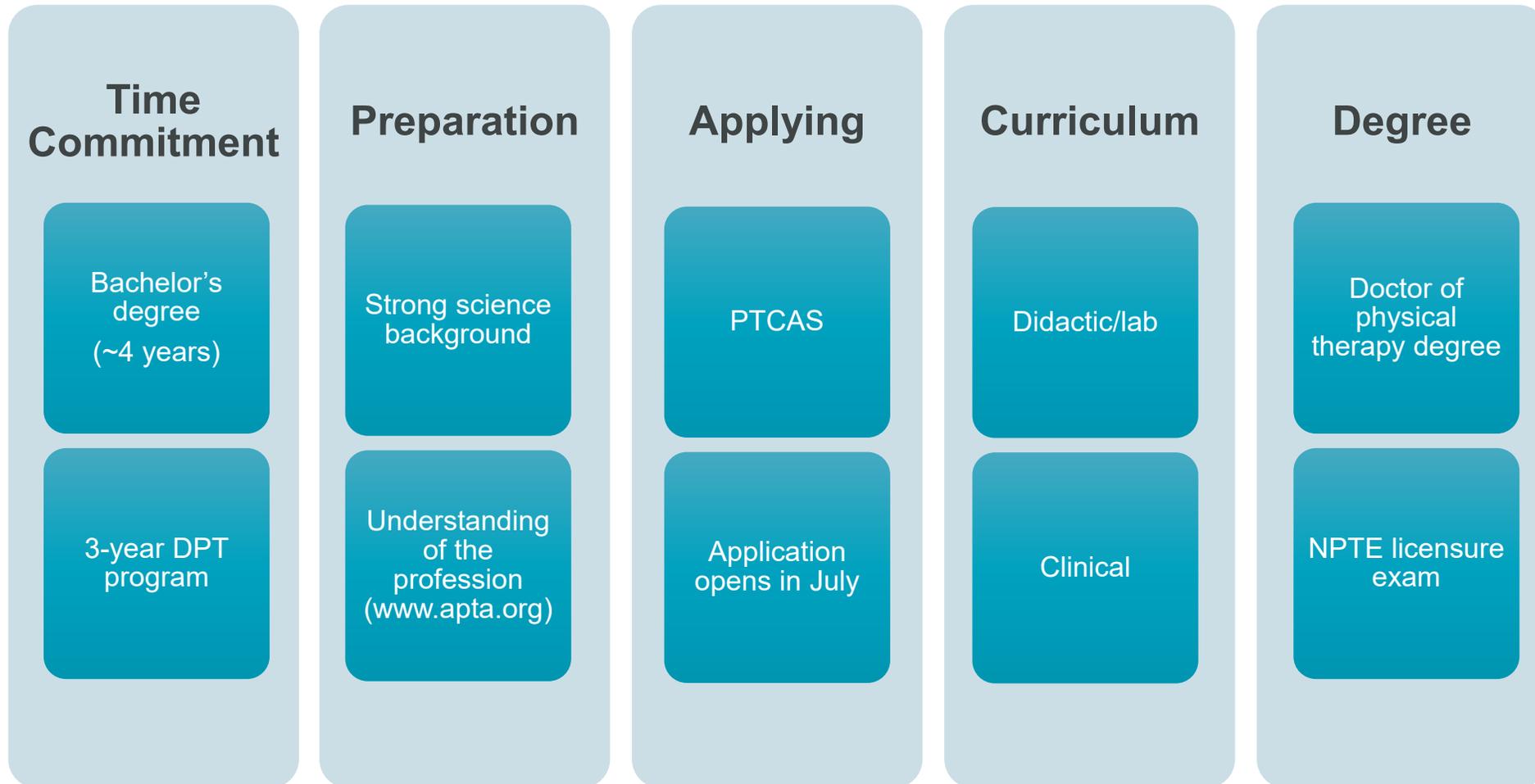
Pathway to DPT



* Some DPT programs offer freshman entry



DPT Application and Education



Pathway to PTA

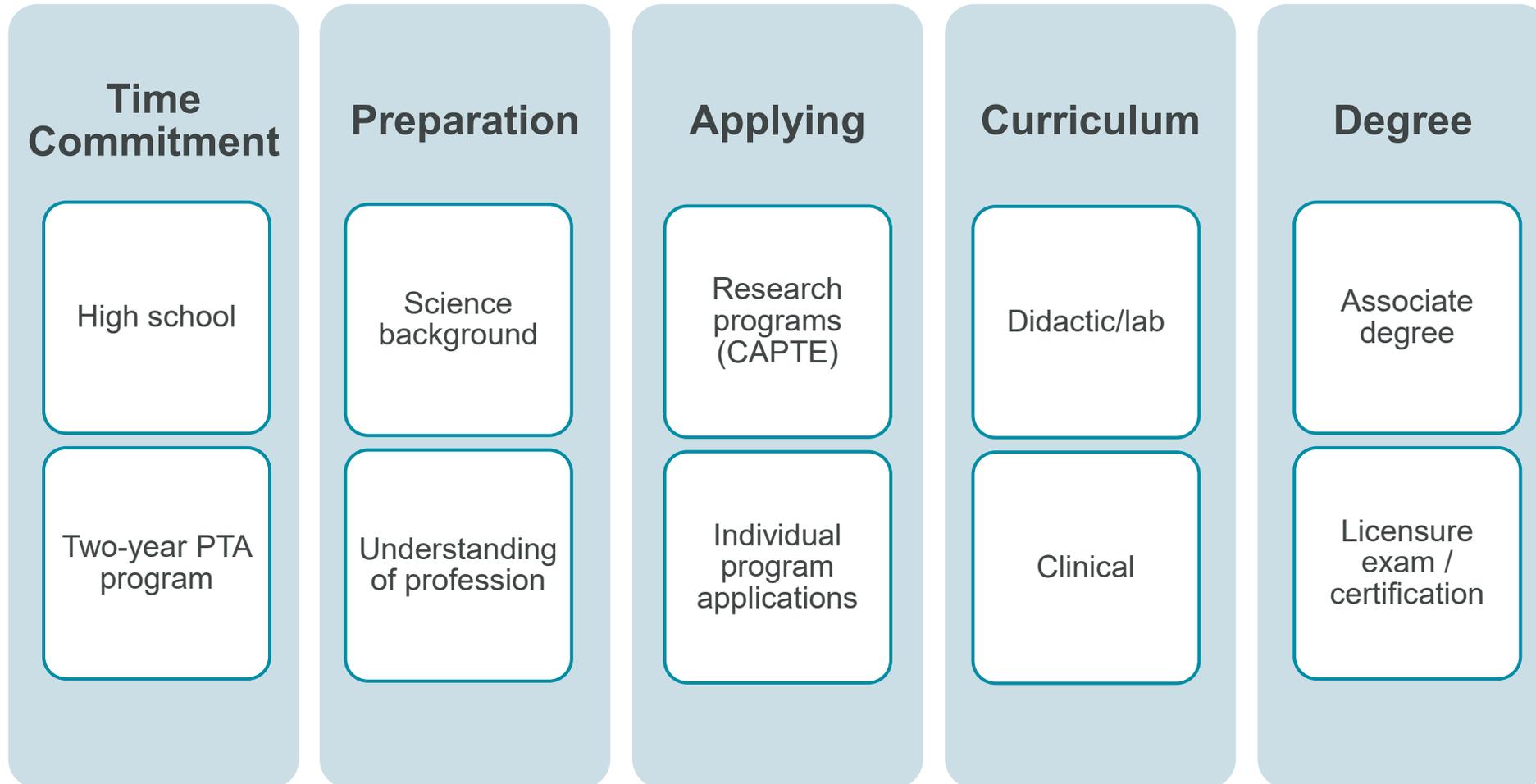
High school diploma or GED

Two-year associate degree

PTA licensure exam



PTA Application and Education



Why Choose Physical Therapy?



Movement Is Essential to Life

PTs and PTAs optimize quality of life by focusing on movement loss prevention and optimal movement performance.



Boston Marathon bombing survivor Adrienne Haslet thought her quality of life would be a zero. Her physical therapist and the rest of her health care team helped Adrienne to move and to believe again.



Physical Therapy Is a Personally, Professionally, and Financially Rewarding Career!

- Top-ranked health care profession
- Growing profession; 14% increase (PT) in 2022-2023
- 2023 Median salaries: \$99,710 (PT) and \$58,740 (PTA)
- Fosters relationships with patients
- Allows you to see the direct impact and benefit of your work



How To Prepare



Start

Preparing

Now!

Do your research

Observe a PT or PTA

Diversify your experience

Find a mentor

Review anatomy and physiology

Build a strong science foundation

Resources



APTA Helpful Resources

American Physical Therapy Association
apta.org

Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service
ptcas.org

Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education
capteonline.org

APTA Free Financial Literacy Resource
moneysmart.ptmovesme.org/

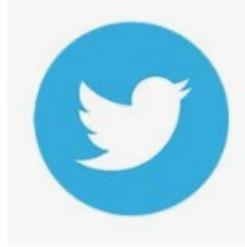
Questions about PT Careers or Pathway to PT/PTA
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Questions & Answers



APTA Financial Resources

- <https://moneysmart.ptmovesme.org/>
- Create a free account and learn important financial skills
- National scholarship portal

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Thank You



Building a community that
advances the profession of
physical therapy to improve
the health of society.

